

8th AYURVEDA DAY

Riga
10 Nov 2023

REMARKS

Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Namaskar,

Thank you for inviting me to join you on this year's Ayurveda Day.

The theme for this year is Ayurveda for One Health.

The traditional and indigenous wisdom has always inherently recognised this interconnectedness and interdependence of humans, other species and the nature of which they are a part.

It reflects this holistic understanding of harmony and balance at various levels.

This understanding is also growing especially after the recent disastrous global Covid19 pandemic.

The World Health Organisation studies show that there is widespread and growing acceptance and use of traditional & complementary medicine globally, including in Europe.

Nearly 90% of WHO members states – that is 170 countries - report the use of traditional medicine.

According to WHO, Traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM) is an important and often underestimated health resource with many applications, especially in the prevention and management of lifestyle-related chronic diseases, and in meeting the health needs of ageing populations.

It further notes that many countries are seeking to expand coverage of essential health services at a time when expectations for healthcare are rising, costs are soaring, and most budgets are either stagnant or being reduced.

More than 100 countries have laws to regulate the use of T&C medicine. And nearly 125 countries have laws to regulate herbal medicines.

There are several well-established traditional medicine systems in the southeast Asia region. Europe lags behind global averages in T&CM laws and regulations. However, even in Europe, there is a marked increase in the number of Member States with a registration system and regulation for herbal medicines, with 45 of the 53 Member States reporting having both.

At the same time lack of research data and financial support for research on T&CM, lack of mechanisms to monitor safety of T&CM practices, and lack of education and training for T&CM providers are among the main challenges.

India is making available significant resources towards promotion of Traditional Medicine globally.

In 2014 a Ministry for Ayush was created to promote Traditional medicine systems.

There are nearly 3,000 Ayurveda hospitals in India and half a million Ayurveda physicians. There are 7,000 licenced Ayurveda pharmacies and 120 Drug Testing Labs. There are 500 Ayurveda colleges.

Last year India hosted the Global Ayush Investment & Innovation Summit.

India is working for inclusion of Ayurveda and related systems in the 11th Revision of the WHO International Classification of Diseases (ICD) in the Second Module of the Supplementary Chapter on Traditional Medicine.

As many of you would be aware, the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine is coming up in Jamnagar in Gujarat. India has committed funds to the tune of USD 100 million over the next decade towards this WHO Centre.

Two months ago, India hosted the First WHO Traditional Medicine Summit.

It focused on use of science, technology, innovation and knowledge exchange to validate T&CM for improving health, nutrition and lifestyles. Use of data and analytics, and digital frontiers including AI were discussed.

The Summit called for facilitate evidence-informed integration of TCIM into national health systems using a primary health care approach, and to progressively realize Universal Health Coverage and all health-related SDGs.

In this broader global context, the Ayush Chair at the University of Riga forms a special bond between India and Latvia.

This collaboration offers a unique opportunity to make a significant and positive contribution to the global efforts to move towards a more evidence-based approach to the use of traditional medicine.

This collaboration is a unique example of SDG 17 that calls for global partnerships to advance other SDGs, in this case SDG 3 that aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Ayush related market in India is estimated at around USD 25 billion annually. India is exporting & herbal products valued at around USD 1.5 billion to around 100 countries. There are around 80 Indian companies with 6,000 products and have received certification.

Plant derivatives, nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals, plant extracts and herbal plants are all witnessing huge growth in turnover.

We hope that experts from Latvia and India can work together to initiate and produce scientific research that can validate some of the Ayurveda treatments.

By promoting scientific collaboration to examine the efficacy of Ayurveda in treating non-communicable diseases such as Diabetes this partnership has the potential to make a lasting contribution to help our collective goal to promote traditional and complementary medicine at global level.

We wish you success in these efforts.

Thank you.